Valerian: A gentle herb for tranquility and sleep

03/05/2025 // Laura Harris // **690** Views

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- Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) is a perennial plant native to Europe and Asia that's known for its calming properties and long history of use in traditional medicine.
- The root contains bioactive compounds like valerenic acid, which can promote relaxation, improve sleep and reduce anxiety.
- Valerian is commonly used to treat insomnia, anxiety, stress, restless leg syndrome (RLS) and menopause symptoms like hot flashes.
- Valerian is available in various forms, such as capsules, tablets, tea, tincture and essential oil, with recommended dosages varying based on the form and intended use.
- Valerian is generally safe for use but may cause side effects like dizziness or stomach upset. Essential oils should be diluted properly before use.

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) is a perennial flowering plant characterized by its fern-like leaves and distinctive, sweet-smelling flowers that bloom in late spring and early summer. The root of the plant is the most commonly used part because of its medicinal properties. Valerian has a strong, earthy odor and a slightly bitter taste, which are due to its high concentration of volatile oils and other active compounds.

Valerian stands out as a gentle yet potent herb with a long history of use in promoting relaxation, improving sleep and easing anxiety in the realm of natural remedies. This plant, native to Europe and Asia, has been cherished for centuries for its calming properties and is now gaining recognition in the modern world of health and wellness.

Valerian's journey as a medicinal herb dates back to ancient times. The Greeks and Romans used it for its sedative and anti-inflammatory properties, and it has been a staple in European folk medicine for centuries. The herb was also widely used during the Middle Ages to treat a variety of ailments, from nervousness and insomnia to digestive issues. (Related: Valerian: Everything you knew and everything you didn't.)

The essential oils and other compounds found in valerian are typically extracted through steam distillation or cold pressing of the dried roots. This process yields a potent oil that is highly valued in aromatherapy, as well as in herbal supplements and remedies.

Valerian health benefits

Valerian's primary health benefits are centered around its ability to promote relaxation, improve sleep and alleviate anxiety. The herb contains several bioactive compounds, including valerenic acid, valerenol and iridoids, which work together to produce its therapeutic effects. In line with this, it can help with conditions and symptoms such as:

- **Insomnia:** Valerian is particularly effective in treating sleep disorders, including insomnia. Studies have shown that it can help improve one's quality of sleep, reduce the time it takes to fall asleep and increase overall sleep duration.

- **Anxiety:** The herb has anxiolytic properties, making it a natural remedy for mild to moderate anxiety. Valerian can help reduce feelings of restlessness and nervousness, promoting a sense of calm and relaxation.

- **Stress:** Valerian can help manage the physiological effects of stress, such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, by modulating the body's stress response.

- **Restless leg syndrome (RLS)**: Some studies suggest that valerian may help alleviate the symptoms of RLS, a condition characterized by an uncomfortable urge to move the legs, often accompanied by tingling or aching sensations.

- **Menopause symptoms:** Valerian can help ease menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes and night sweats, by regulating hormone levels and promoting relaxation.

Availability and dosage

Valerian is widely available as a dietary supplement in various forms, including capsules, tablets, teas, tinctures and essential oils. The recommended dosage can vary depending on the form and concentration of the product, as well as their specific needs.

- **Tea:** Steep one to two grams of dried valerian root in hot water for 10-15 minutes. Drink one to two cups daily, preferably in the evening.

- **Capsules or tablets:** Start with a dose of 300 - 600 mg, taken once or twice daily, about 30 minutes before bedtime.

- **Tincture:** Mix one to two milliliters (about 15-30 drops) with a small amount of water and take once or twice daily.

- **Essential oil:** Dilute one to two drops of valerian essential oil in a carrier oil or add it to a diffuser. Do not ingest essential oils directly.

While valerian is generally considered safe for most adults, it can have side effects, including headaches, dizziness and stomach upset. When using essential oils, it is important to use a high-quality, pure essential oil and to follow all safety precautions, such as diluting them properly before application.

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Watch this video to learn more about the health benefits of valerian.

Valerian Health Benefits

This video is from the Holistic Herbalist channel on *Brighteon.com*.

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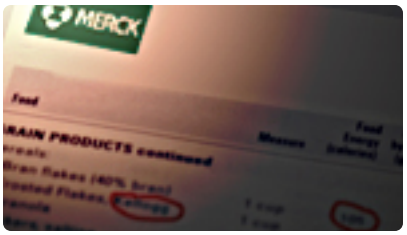

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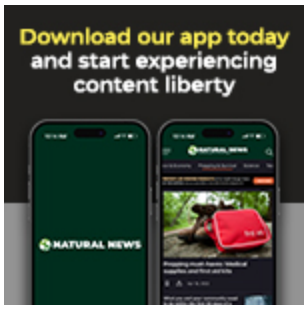

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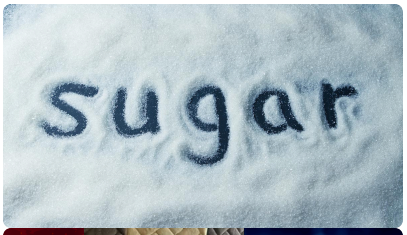

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